



Meeting Summary October 26, 2016

Attendance

Panel Members:

Hank Alinger, Chair
Don Taylor, Vice Chair
Phil Engelke
Bob Gorman
Sujit Mishra
Julie Wilson

DPZ Staff:

Kristin O'Connor, George Saliba, Karitsa Norman

Plan #16-15: Dorsey Center Apartments

Owner/Developer: H&H Rock/Murn Development

Architect: Henneman & Associates, LLC.

Civil Engineer: Benchmark Engineering, Inc.

Landscape Engineer: Design Collective, Inc.

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Chair Mr. Hank Alinger opened the meeting at 7:30 pm, calling for introductions of the panel, staff and project team.
2. **Review of Dorsey Center Apartments – DAP Plan #16-15**

Background

Dorsey Center is a proposed 230 unit luxury apartment community located on 4.26 acres at 6771 Dorsey Road. The site is situated off Dorsey Road just south of Route 1 and west of Route 100 in Elkrige, Maryland. The site is zoned Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and is a ~0.6 mile walk to the Dorsey MARC station. TOD zoning provides for the development and redevelopment of key parcels within 3,500 feet of a MARC Station. The TOD District encourages the development of multi-use centers, combining office and high-density residential development that are located and designed for safe and convenient pedestrian access by commuters who use MARC and other public transit. The site is located within the *Route 1 Manual* study area and is subject to DAP review and the requirements and recommendations in the *Manual*.

Scope of Work

Mr. Jeff Henneman, the project architect from Henneman and Associates, Inc. provided an overview of the project by reviewing the master site plan and explaining the project objectives. The site is located in an area with an office park and other places of employment. The project team feels this apartment complex will be a good addition to the neighborhood. The close proximity to the Dorsey MARC station will also provide tenants the ability to catch the train to Baltimore for work. The design includes a wrapped parking garage. The building frontage along Dorsey Road was designed to be as close to the road as possible

while still allowing for open courtyard amenity spaces to be included along Dorsey Road as well as the other sides of the building. The courtyards have been designed to be open and inclusive as they are anticipated to act as places of social gathering and interaction. Some of the courtyards include stormwater management ESD's. The project team is working to be creative in order to meet all of their stormwater management requirements on the site. The amenities are proposed to be high end in order to compete in the current market. The objective for the building exterior is to include 40% masonry surfaces. More masonry will be included on high visibility facades while lower visibility facades will have more siding. The corner units will have floor to ceiling windows. The loading and service area is proposed for the rear of the building off Deerpath Road.

Mr. Brian Reetz, the project landscape engineer from Design Collective, Inc., provided an overview of the landscape plan. Mr. Reetz stated that the motor court entry to the building and the parking garage will be designed with decorative paving. Mr. Reetz pointed out that the major amenity space, including the pool and four season courtyard are located along the front of the site and help activate the street along Dorsey Road. Mr. Reetz clarified that the landscape plan shows the proposed hardscape details for the site and that additional decorative hardscape shown on one of the renderings will not extend out from the building along Dorsey Road but there will be a sidewalk and landscaping. Mr. Reetz mentioned that the courtyards will accommodate environmental site design (ESD) features in order to meet stormwater management requirements. These include planted areas designed to collect stormwater that will have seating and other amenities such as a grill around them to be used by the tenants. The project team intends to use higher end furnishings on the site but is still in the process of making specific selections.

Mr. Alinger directed staff to present its comments on the project. DPZ staff member Mr. George Saliba provided a brief summary of staff comments and DPZ recommendations including the following:

1. DPZ recommends the DAP provide feedback on the building setbacks.
2. DPZ recommends the DAP review and critique overall pedestrian circulation of the site considering it is a TOD project intended to have connectivity with the nearby MARC station.
3. DPZ recommends the DAP provide expertise on the design of the main entry way to the building and parking garage off of Dorsey Road.
4. DPZ recommends that the DAP provide feedback on site design elements such as the amenity spaces, lighting, signage, landscaping, and location of mechanical equipment.

Mr. Alinger asked the applicant what they are proposing for lighting along Dorsey Road.

Mr. Henneman responded that the plan is to add decorative lighting in compliance with the *Route 1 Manual* along the front of the building. The fixtures will likely be acorn style. Mr. Henneman further explained that the project team intends for this building to be well lit and safely lit.

Mr. Alinger asked the project team to talk about the edges of the site and how they are being treated, particularly along the north and east sides of the site.

Project engineer Mr. Chris Ogle from Benchmark Engineering responded that there will be swales along the northern side of the site buffering it from the adjacent hotel parking lot. He also stated that a retaining wall will likely be needed along the north east side of the site but that it would not be significant in size.

Mr. Reetz commented that the grade of the site rises at the north east corner but that the proposed tot lot in this location will be on flat ground but may have a low profile retaining wall.

DAP member Mr. Bob Gorman observed that, from his experience, many people living in these types of apartments have dogs. He had observed that in other similar developments tot lots that were initially installed end up being removed due to lack of use in cases of poor visibility and that it might make more sense to use the space along the back corner of the site as the dog park and move the tot lot to a green area in front of the building where it will have more visibility.

DAP member Mr. Phil Engelke asked if the pool courtyard area would have a wall around it.

Mr. Henneman responded that it would have a picket style fence around it as required by code. He stated that the pool would be slightly higher up and may have a low profile 2-3 foot high retaining wall around it for grade purposes but that it was not the intent to build a large wall around the pool area.

Mr. Alinger asked the design team if they had looked at using bridges or decking in the amenity courtyards where ESD's are planned in order to make more of the area usable.

Mr. Reetz responded that this has been considered and that the stormwater analysis is still on-going. He stated that in order to meet stormwater requirements for the site, the project team will have to be creative.

DAP Vice Chair Don Taylor stated that this was a TOD project and connectivity had been mentioned by both the applicant and by DPZ staff but that there is no way to walk or bike along Dorsey Road and get to the train station. There are no sidewalks, no bike paths and the road does not even connect to allow access to the train station. He stated that something is amiss with this being the case and that for TOD projects to truly work something needs to be done to make these connections. Mr. Taylor stated that he understands the applicant can only control what is on their site and that the project architecture is great, but the bigger picture regarding how to make TOD projects work needs to be looked at.

Ms. Kristin O'Connor from DPZ stated that the department was in the process of starting a Route 1 corridor analysis to examine the issues raised by Mr. Taylor including zoning, transportation, and connectivity but that the Ellicott City flooding had put this study on temporary hold.

Mr. Engelke stated that Route 1 is seeing new apartment buildings all over the place but people cannot walk and bike and the County needs to look at these issues so that the infrastructure can catch up with the rapid development.

Mr. Ogle stated that the project does allow access to Deerpath Road which does connect to the parking lot of the MARC station.

Mr. Taylor stated that the building architecture for these types of projects in the Route 1 corridor has been getting better and better. However, he wanted to see improvements to the main entry to the building and the parking garage coming off of Dorsey Road. He stated that the pedestrian entrance to the building was off to the side of the motor court and should be more prominently featured and centered if possible. He also felt that the paving along the back service area could be better designed to define this area while also allowing for well-marked pedestrian connectivity.

Mr. Henneman responded that the design team might be able to pay more attention to the design of the front interior amenity area and could review the back service area.

DAP member Julie Wilson stated that she loved the site plan but agreed more attention needed to be given to the main entry. She suggested that a low wall and an entry courtyard for pedestrians might help better define this area.

Mr. Alinger agreed that a low profile wall would help frame the entry.

Mr. Engelke commented that the front entry needs something at the ground level such as a low wall or pylons to make it feel like the main entry for pedestrians that it is intended to be. He stated that identity graphics can help identify entrances that are not where someone might expect them to be.

Mr. Engelke also stated that based on the renderings, it looked like the building lettering would be 5-6 feet high and he hoped this was just for visual purposes to show on the rendering and not the actual proposed field condition.

Mr. Henneman responded that more attention could be paid to the ground level at the front entry area and confirmed that the building lettering would not be 5-6 feet high. The building signage and graphics are still being developed.

Mr. Gorman stated that there could be two entries to the interior amenity space including one from the motor court and one from the street.

Ms. Wilson stated that she felt the building elevations were beautiful and that she really liked the courtyard areas. She recommended that the design team think more about the elevations and how they interface with the street and with the courtyards. The courtyards are special spaces. Ms. Wilson felt that by varying the elevations and the articulation at the courtyard areas it would help provide identity.

Mr. Taylor stated that he felt the rendered elevations did not do the project design justice in terms of the articulation and massing that has been included.

DAP member Mr. Sujit Mishra stated that a 3-D model would better present the reality of the great architecture, massing and articulation.

Mr. Mishra stated that the rooftop was large and flat and asked if the possibility of having a green roof or rooftop amenity space had been considered.

Mr. Henneman responded that the mechanical equipment will be located on the center of the roof so as to be screened from public view.

Mr. Reetz added that rooftop decks and green roofs are more feasible on podium construction but that this is wood built and not as suitable for these types of amenities.

Mr. Mishra stated that the top floor of the garage might be a place for potential green features.

Mr. Engelke asked how the graphics and signage will let people know they are there.

Mr. Henneman responded that the team was still looking at this but it might be possible to have graphics and banners located on the front and back sides of the building.

Mr. Engelke stated that it would be good for this building to differentiate itself through use of signage and graphics because, while this building stands out architecturally, Route 1 is starting to look like one large building. He further commented that it would be nice to have signage directing people from the site to the MARC station.

The DAP adopted the following recommendations for the project. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Planning Board.

DAP Vice Chair Don Taylor made the following motion:

1. "The applicant reconsider the primary entrance to the motor court and how that can be dealt with in a better scale with entry walls and pylons or some method that resolves the issue with the large mouth garage." Seconded by DAP member Phil Engelke.

Vote: 6-0 to approve

DAP member Julie Wilson made the following motion:

2. "Take another look at the elevations and see if you can't accent the courtyards and maybe break the vertical elements down a little bit based on whether it is a courtyard or a street to help you get some variety and definition." Seconded by DAP Vice Chair Don Taylor.

Vote: 6-0 to approve

DAP Member Bob Gorman made the following motion:

3. "That the applicant send a letter to the County lobbying for better a connection and identification to the MARC station." Seconded by DAP member Phil Engelke.

Vote: 6-0 to approve

3. Other Business

A) 2017 DAP Meeting Schedule

DPZ's Mr. Saliba provided a brief overview of the proposed DAP meeting schedule for 2017.

DAP Chair Hank Alinger made the following motion:

1. "Motion to approve the calendar as presented." Seconded by DAP member Mr. Phil Engelke.

Vote: 6-0 to approve

B) DAP Member Composition

DPZ's Ms. O'Connor stated that unless there is a DAP meeting held between now and December 7, 2016, this will likely be Mr. Engelke's final meeting as a DAP member since his term is coming to an end. Ms. O'Connor provided an update that there are two new DAP members who need to be approved by Council before they can start and that they are expected to be on-board for the December 7th DAP meeting. Ms. O'Connor thanked Mr. Engelke for his time and service to the County as a DAP member.

C) Informational Item

An informational item related to the Columbia Lakefront Bell Tower - DAP Plan #16-12, presented at the July 13, 2016 DAP meeting, was given to the DAP. This item provided information on a proposal by the Columbia Association to temporarily locate a bell tree at the end of the pier on the Columbia lakefront in time for the 50th anniversary celebration. As this is being permitted as a temporary use, the project does not have to come back before the DAP at this time.

4. Call to Adjourn

DAP Chair Hank Alinger adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm.